

## Raanan Gillon

“Human Reproductive Cloning: A Look at the Arguments Against It and A Rejection of Most of Them”

## Gillon's overall conclusion:

Reproductive human cloning, though not inherently wrong, *at this time* is unsafe. Thus it would be immoral to practice it *now*. But in the future the benefits can outweigh any harms.

## Anti-cloning arguments and Gillon's responses

Argument #1: The 'Yuk' argument (a.k.a the wisdom of repugnance arg.)

Reply: But, moral feelings *by themselves* cannot indicate to us what is right and wrong.

- » Moral feelings may be morally admirable, but also be morally wrong.
- » E.g., “Think of the moral gut responses of your favorite bigots—for example, the ones who feel so passionately that homosexuality is evil, that black people are inferior, that women should be subservient to men, that Jews and Gypsies and the mentally retarded or mentally ill ought to be exterminated. People have existed—some still exist—who have these strong “gut beliefs” which they believe to be strong *moral* feelings...” (reader 40)
- » We need to analyze whether moral feelings are good or bad. E.g, Doctors often cut people up and stick their fingers in people's bottoms. Disgusting but it's the right thing to do.

## Anti-cloning arguments and Gillon's responses

Argument #2: Cloning is *unnatural*, therefore it is wrong.

Reply: But what does '*unnatural*' refer to?

There are at least four senses of '*unnatural*':

1. **Anything that occurs in nature.**
  - » Reply: as natural beings, anything we do is natural in this sense. Not helpful.
2. **Affected by human intervention**
  - » Reply: includes a lot of good things, e.g., medical surgery
3. **“it is part of human nature to be a moral agent and thus human people who behave immorally or even amorally are acting unnaturally in this sense of acting against their human nature.” (reader, 42)**
  - » Although an important moral concept, it does not provide a simple method of moral assessment. Otherwise, we get something like the 'Yuk argument'
4. **“antinatural or against nature”, i.e., anything that destroys our human moral nature.**
  - » Another important moral concept, but we need reasons for that show that cloning is contrary to human nature.

### Anti-cloning arguments and Gillon's responses

Argument #3: Cloning person X makes an exact duplicate X; so we have two people that are exactly the same in every respect.

But, is this true? Even if it was, what's the moral worry?

### Anti-cloning arguments and Gillon's responses

Argument #4: everyone is entitled (has a right to) their own unique genetic code.

- Token/Type identity distinction
  - » Token identity is the same instance or token being identical
  - » Type identity is the same kind or type of identity.
  - » E.g., two cans of Coke have the same type identity but are different tokens of the same type.
- So, what do people mean by "own unique genetic code"?
- It can't mean token identity b/c its just an analytic truth; A = A
- So, they must mean type-type identity. If so, then I have a right to my type of genetic code.
- But this can't be right, b/c then identical twins would be violating each other's rights, so one would have to get rid of the other.

### Anti-cloning arguments and Gillon's responses

Argument #5: by cloning, you are violating the human dignity of the clone.

But how? Is a clone necessarily exploited (treated as a *mere* means to someone else's end).

Consider the Katie Trebing case:

Within hours of Katie Trebing's birth Dec. 12, 2002, she needed a blood transfusion to save her life -- the first of many to come. Steve and Stacy Trebing's daughter was born with Diamond Blackfan anemia, a rare bone marrow disease that affects just 30 out of every 4 million newborns each year in the United States and Canada.

There was one way to cure Katie and allow her to live a normal life: a bone marrow transplant from a perfectly matched sibling. But Katie's older brother Calvin was not a match. They would need to give Katie another sibling. Lipton (doctor) told them about a specific process that would ensure that their next child, and Katie, would share the same bone marrow DNA. To Steve, the whole thing seemed more like science fiction.

### Katie Trebing Case

There were several steps, starting with in vitro fertilization to help the Trebings produce a maximum number of embryos. Then a doctor would test for embryos with matching bone marrow DNA using a procedure called preimplantation genetic diagnosis, or PGD. The test is done by pulling one cell from each embryo and identifying the ones that match Katie's bone marrow DNA.

On May 25, doctors were ready to do the transplant. They removed the bone marrow from 1-year-old Christopher's hip while he was under general anesthetic. Then they transfused it into Katie and the suspenseful waiting began. She lost her hair, and grew weak and pale from the effects of the chemo. But less than two weeks later, Katie began producing red blood cells for the first time ever. Thirty-seven days after checking into the hospital, Katie went home.

While the Trebings received tremendous support from most people, others have accused them of creating a donor baby. Some critics say PGD creates children for "spare parts." But for Steve and Stacy, the technology meant a healthy sibling added to their family and the chance for Katie to live a normal life.

## Gillon's view

Need to answer two parts:

1. Why do and ought people decide to have children?
  - "My argument is that, until shown otherwise, we should accept that there is nothing wrong with making either a self-interested or an instrumental decision to have a child." (reader 45)
2. "Once there is another person created as a result of one's decision, then that person must be accorded the same moral respect as is due to all people and must not be treated merely as a means to an end, an object, a tool, an instrument. So while one may perfectly properly decide to have a child in order to provide a source of life-saving cord blood or marrow for one's existing child, one must of course then respect the new child as an end and never treat him or her merely as a means to an end." (reader 45)

## Gillon's view

All the arguments for a permanent ban on human cloning fail.

4 arguments in favor of a temporary ban *currently* succeed.

1. The present technology for human cloning is unsafe.
2. Given safety concerns, the benefits of cloning does not outweigh the harms.
3. Distributive justice principles make human cloning a low priority
4. "respect for autonomy within a democratic society requires adequate social debate before decisions are democratically made about socially highly contentious issues so a moratorium is also needed to provide time for this full social debate and, with luck, for more informed, more deliberated, and less frantic decisions." (reader 49)

## Fritz Allhoff

"Telomeres and the Ethics of Human Cloning" -- (see website for this article)

## Telomeres

What is a telomere?

As cells replicate through the years, telomeres within the cell become shorter and shorter

Shortened telomeres within the cell nucleus contributes to both the aging of the organism and its susceptibility to degenerative disease.

## Telomeres and Cloning

What does this have to do with cloning?

Recall the process of cloning. A clone will start its existence with shortened telomeres.

Should we not clone as a result?

Would the clone have a life that is not worth living?

## The morality of cloning

Has the clone been *harmed* in virtue of being cloned?

An account of *what it is* to harm someone (alternatively, to be harmed by someone)

The counterfactual criterion of harm:

X harms Y by doing A if Y would be better off had X not done A.

E.g., Joe harms John by punching him if John would be better off had Joe not punched John.

So is the clone harmed because he's cloned?

## The morality of cloning

But there's still a sense that cloning ought not to be done. What explains this?

The Same Number Quality Claim (Q): "if in either of two outcomes the same number of people would ever live, it would be bad if those who [in fact] live are worse off, or have a lower quality of life, than those who *would have lived*".

## The morality of cloning

(Q) seems to be a plausible principle

E.g. of the fourteen year-old girl: she decides to have a child at 14, rather than waiting 10 years when she can provide a better life for a child.

Consider two outcomes:

» Outcome #1: child born to her at age 14.

» Outcome #2: (different) child born to her at 24.

What makes her act wrong is that she *could have* created some child with a higher quality of life, had she waited.

## **The morality of cloning**

Back to cloning

**Decisions to clone are wrong in the same way that the girl's decision to have a child at 14 is wrong.**

**A child born with normal telomeres is better off than one born with stunted ones.**

**So, those considering cloning should *wait* to clone. Or of course produce a child sexually (in vitro, if need be; with donor sperm and egg if need be). These are the better options.**